



TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
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REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Michelle Bourdeau, Manager, Environment and Climate

DATE: April 25, 2025

REPORT NO.: CSE-2025-014

SUBJECT: Greener Homes Halton Hills (Retrofit Project)

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. CSE-2025-014, dated April 25, 2025, regarding the Greener Homes Halton Hills (Retrofit Project), be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to implement a new energy retrofit two-year project "Greener Homes Halton Hills", as summarized in Report No. CSE-2025-014;

AND FURTHER THAT Windfall Centre be awarded a single source contract, for up to a two (2) year period, for the delivery of the Greener Homes Halton Hills project;

AND FURTHER THAT the Manager of Purchasing be authorized to issue a single source purchase order to Windfall Centre in the upset amount of \$108,000.00 (plus applicable taxes) for a two (2) year term;

AND FURTHER THAT staff report back to Council upon completion of the project to identify and report on results and next steps or recommendations;

AND FURTHER THAT Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute any necessary contract documents for the project.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- With funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund, the Retrofit Halton Hills pilot program was launched in April 2022 offering no-interest loans for homeowners to complete energy efficiency retrofits.

- The pilot was very successful and able to support ten homeowners to participate in the program - resulting in an average energy reduction of 29.3%.
- In 2024, \$100,000.00 was approved in the capital budget to develop a business case for the continued implementation of a retrofit program.
- Staff have reviewed options to expand and continue the pilot program based on lessons learned, and also considered alternatives to offer a practical and feasible approach within the Town's resources.
- Staff recommend that the existing approved budget be used to launch a two-year project named "Greener Homes Halton Hills," to support home energy efficiency actions and retrofits. The project will offer one-on-one advice from expert 'Energy Coaches' and an online customized home energy savings opportunities tool. While the Town will facilitate the project, any retrofit actions will be homeowner/occupant-driven. Unlike during the pilot phase, the Town will not provide loans to participants.
- Staff will continue to apply for any applicable and available funding opportunities to support the project.
- This project will support residents to access 2025 provincial rebates for energy efficiency upgrades and identify low- and no-cost opportunities to save money on energy bills. Launching the program quickly will support more residents in accessing these rebates while they are available.
- Over two years, the project will enable owners/occupants of all eligible residential buildings (up to 3 stories) to access the customized online tool and approximately 100-200 residents to receive one-on-one support with an Energy Coach.
- Supporting residents in increasing energy efficiency will help lower energy bills, improve resiliency and can support local HVAC and retrofit companies, while building on the objectives of the pilot program.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Retrofit Halton Hills (RHH) pilot program was launched in April 2022 to advance the Town's climate resilience goals by providing access to interest-free financing for energy retrofits to homeowners. The program was approved through [Report No. ADMIN-2021-0037](#) and Council passed [BY-LAW NO. 2021-0056](#) to authorize the undertaking of energy efficiency, renewable energy and water conservation projects as local improvements under the RHH Pilot Program. The pilot program was 50% funded through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund. Given that residential buildings in Halton Hills account for about 31% of energy consumption and 22% of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions (per 2016 data, Low Carbon Transition Strategy), home energy retrofits were identified in the [Low Carbon Transition Strategy](#) (LCTS) as one of the most impactful actions to reduce emissions.

To participate, homeowners submitted an application to confirm eligibility. Once accepted, they were required to complete an energy audit and a project plan, including a list of retrofits to be completed, provide contractor quotes, and enter into a loan agreement. Upon completion and verification of the project, and Council approval of the Local Improvement Charge, the loan (plus a \$450 administrative fee) repayment

schedule commenced with a 10-year term and was added to the homeowner's tax bills.

Of the 20 applications received, the pilot program had capacity to accept ten home retrofit projects which were completed between December 2022 and July 2024. An interim update [BEC-2022-0001](#) with preliminary results was brought to Council on September 26, 2022. The most popular retrofits were windows/doors, insulation and solar installation. However, there was a large variety in the types of retrofits which also included heat pumps, high efficiency furnaces, water heaters, air conditioners, and air sealing. The average loan amount was \$36,000.00 and most participants also received at least \$5,000.00 in rebates through other programs.

The pilot program was highly effective and successful with an average energy reduction of 29.3% (range between 8%-68%) and an average greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction of 33.6% (range between 0%-90%). Only retrofits that reduced energy use from fossil fuels resulted in a GHG reduction.

The development and delivery of the pilot program cost \$521,236.00. Through the FCM Green Municipal Fund grant, 50% of the cost was reimbursed. The Town contributed \$260,627.50 towards the program, as well as staff time. The program budget included hiring a contract Retrofit Halton Hills Coordinator to administer the program.

The ten issued retrofit loans amounted to a total of \$365,064.15, which includes \$360,564.15 for retrofit renovations and \$4,500.00 for administrative fees. These loans will be repaid annually until 2034 and will be returned to the retrofit reserve (Fund 44).

In 2024, Council approved a capital budget request of \$100,000 to review the pilot and develop a business case for continued program implementation, including potential program expansion (Retrofit Halton Hills - Business Case and Implementation Plan). In 2024, Council approved a capital budget request of \$100,000.00 to review the pilot and develop a business case for continued program implementation, including potential program expansion (Retrofit Halton Hills - Business Case and Implementation Plan). Proceeding with the original approach would have required hiring a consultant to assess how best to administer a scaled-up version of the program, and how to fund the retrofits.

Based on the results of the pilot program and lessons learned, staff recommend that Council approve moving forward with a less resource-intensive, practical, and a more widely available version of the program. In developing the alternative approach, staff took into account the following considerations from the pilot:

- Ongoing implementation would require at least one additional staff resource with expertise in energy retrofits to support program administration.
- The program would require capital to cover the retrofit loans, which are not currently in the financial forecast. The loan repayment rate is not sufficient to sustain the expected costs of the program.
- While the retrofits implemented were impactful, the pilot program was only able to support ten retrofit projects with the resources allocated.
- The cost and impact of projects were highly variable between each participating home. More expensive projects did not always yield a higher return.

Staff have reviewed options for practical alternatives to the current program and recommend re-allocating the previously approved \$100,000.00 (as well as \$10,000.00 from previously approved Capital Project 1801-22-0103 - Renewable Energy Tool) to offer a new 2-year “Greener Homes Halton Hills” project, with a report back to Council after the two years. The new project would include:

- An online, customizable tool that provides an estimate of household energy use and identifies which retrofits can help save the most energy and money on energy bills.
- Access to a professional Energy Coach (Registered Energy Coach, Certified Energy Manager, and/or Professional Engineer designations) for up to 4 hours of one-on-one support through phone or virtual meetings. The Energy Coach can:
 - Support use of and discuss results from the online tool;
 - Help residents identify the best return on investment to save money on energy bills;
 - Provide advice on low- and no-cost actions to reduce energy bills;
 - Guide residents through any rebate programs they may be eligible for;
 - Advise what to look for in a contractor and what questions to ask;
 - Assist with understanding and comparing quotes from contractors;
 - Discuss the types of financing options available;
 - Answer questions about retrofit technologies, equipment and associated household use; and
 - Provide unbiased expert support – Energy Coaches are not affiliated with any contractors, lenders, etc. and do not promote any specific companies.










An illustration demonstrating how the project would be implemented, including how homeowners would interact with the features of the project, is included as Appendix A.

Similar energy coach services and/or online tools are currently offered by both Peel and Durham Regions (in partnership with local municipalities), Wellington County, City of Peterborough, and City of Ottawa, as well as many other Canadian municipalities.

This project would require minimal staff resources as the work would be delivered by [Windfall Centre](#), a non-profit social enterprise currently providing similar services to Durham Region. Only Energy Coach time spent directly supporting Halton Hills residents would be billed as a cost to the project. Access to the online tool would require a one-time set-up fee and a monthly subscription fee, which would be covered as part of the Town’s project and made available to eligible households. If approved, staff intend to leverage the existing budget to apply for external grants to support program delivery.

The project would offer timely support for residents to identify actions that they can take to reduce their energy bill and take advantage of the recently announced provincial rebates (Figure 1). While there is no time frame currently identified for the provincial rebate program, launching Greener Homes Halton Hills promptly will ensure more residents have adequate time to take advantage of these rebates.

Figure 1: 2025 Ontario Energy Retrofit Rebates Available via homerenovationsavings.ca

Bundle and save! Start with a home energy assessment, then complete two or more upgrades to receive your rebates.	Single upgrades Skip the home energy assessment. Receive rebates on eligible energy-efficiency upgrades.
 Home energy assessment Get \$600 back	 Cold climate air source heat pump Up to \$7,500 [‡]
 Insulation Up to \$7,700	 Ground source heat pump Up to \$12,000 [‡]
 Windows and doors Get \$100 back per rough opening	 Smart thermostat Get \$75
 Air sealing Up to \$250	 Solar panels and battery storage Up to \$10,000
 Heat pump water heaters Get \$500 back on qualified heat pump water heaters <small>Windows, doors and heat pump water heaters must be an ENERGY STAR® certified model.</small>	<small>The heat pump you choose must be on Natural Resources Canada's qualified products list.</small>

With the recommended model, the project will enable owners/occupants of all eligible residential buildings (up to 3 stories) to access the online tool and approximately 100-200 residents could receive one-on-one support/advice, increasing access to provincial rebates, and greatly increasing the reach of the program. Further, this program can support local HVAC and retrofit businesses that may be hired to implement retrofits. The results and experiences from the pilot program can be leveraged to provide local examples for residents, demonstrating what their neighbours were able to achieve through retrofits and sharing advice and testimonials.

When surveyed in 2021 as part of the development of the original pilot program, approximately 90% of respondents indicated they were willing to spend money to increase the energy efficiency of their home. However, a number of barriers were identified that prevented them from taking action. The Greener Homes Halton Hills project will address these barriers, including:

- Cost/Understanding rebates – by helping residents access rebates, financing options, and low-cost actions
- Complexity – by providing ongoing one-on-one support throughout the process
- Lack of knowledge – by providing personalized access to unbiased experts
- Help with evaluation – by offering an easy, online customizable tool that can be accessed at any time as well as individualized expert advice

Greener Homes Halton Hills will not offer loans.

In addition to helping residents save money and access 2025 provincial rebates, implementing the Greener Homes Halton Hills project supports the Town's Strategic Plan and the Halton Hills Low Carbon Transition Strategy. It also aligns with Report No. [BEC-2023-005](#) (dated May 16, 2023), whereby Council directed staff to "...consistent with the Council Resolution, dated February 13, 2023 regarding Net Zero 2030 Update, ...continue to implement feasible and practical environmental and climate change actions, with the goal of continuing to protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions..."

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report identifies natural areas and heritage and a thriving economy as two of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report impacts and/or helps address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target through climate mitigation.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement has been conducted as follows: Online Survey completed in 2021 through Let's Talk Halton Hills. The results of the online survey, as noted above, demonstrated that respondents were highly interested in energy retrofits but experienced barriers to taking action related to lack of knowledge and understanding of retrofits, rebates and financing options. Staff have received positive feedback from the pilot participants.

If the recommendations of this report are approved, public engagement will be undertaken to create awareness of the project and its uptake.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Staff from Finance and Information Technology Services were consulted in the preparation of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report has an immediate financial impact and requires a funding source.

As presented in the table below, the project costs to implement the new two-year Greener Homes Halton Hills project is \$108,000, plus \$1,901 non-recoverable HST at 1.76%. Staff recommend that funding for the new project be derived from the two previously approved capital projects as shown below.

Description	Amount
2024 RHH - Bus. Case & Implement (1801-10-0101)	100,000
2024 Renewable Energy Opp. Tool (1801-22-0103)	10,000
Total Approved Budget	110,000

Estimated Expenses

Windfall Centre	108,000
Non-recoverable HST (1.76%)	1,901
Total estimated expenses	109,901

Remaining Budget

99

Any additional funding in the future will be subject to Council approval as part of future budgets and future considerations for project implementation.

Reviewed and approved by,

Kevin Okimi, Director of Parks, Community Development & Environment

Damian Szybalski, Commissioner of Community Services

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer